Mexican-American War Mini-Q

Step Six: From Thesis to Essay Writing

Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

Working Title  Was the United States Justified in Going to War With Mexico?

Paragraph #1
Grabber: The words “Manifest Destiny” were in the air!

Background: In early 19th century US was expanding. Louisiana Purchase, Texas, now a chance to get California. Polk was elected President. War broke out.

Stating the question with key terms defined: Was the United States right to go to war with Mexico?

Thesis and roadmap: The United States was not justified in going to war with Mexico for at least three reasons: Polk caused the war to start; the US was mostly after land; some Americans wanted to expand slavery.

Paragraph #2
Baby Thesis for bucket one: War not justified because Polk provoked it.

Evidence: supporting detail from documents with document citation
   Southern border between Texas and Mexico was disputed (Background Essay)
   Polk sent soldiers into disputed land. Mexico saw it as an invasion (Doc C).

Argument: connecting evidence to the thesis
   From Mexican point of view, the Mexican soldiers had reason to attack American troops.

Paragraph #3
Baby Thesis for bucket two: War not justified because US was after more land

Evidence:
   Manifest Destiny was a popular idea. (Doc A)
   Polk was not honest when he said US simply protecting its borders. (Doc B)

Argument:
   Mexican newspaper El Tiempo was right. Says US like a bandit
   US took California after war. Shows El Tiempo was right

Paragraph #4
Baby Thesis for bucket three: War not justified because it would expand slavery

Evidence:
   Many Americans who moved into Texas part of Mexico had slaves (Doc D)

Argument:
   Mexico had reason to be upset.
   US going against its own belief in freedom by adding to slave area

Paragraph #5
Conclusion: Restatement of main idea along with possible insight or wrinkle
   A person could argue getting California and other territory was good for United States.
   But US paid a great price and that price was shame.